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PROSPECT
OF
The Political Relations
WHICH SUBSIST BETWEEN
THE FRENCH REPUBLIC
AND
THE HELVETICK BODY.

BY COLONEL WEISS, *R*
MEMBER OF THE SOVEREIGN COUNCIL OF BERNE,

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PICCADILLY. 1794.

THE FRENCH REPUBLIC



THE

BY GEORGE WILKINSON

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AND

WILLIAM

PROSPECT
OF THE
POLITICAL RELATIONS, &c:

CHAP. I.

THE subjects for our present consideration, and which I propose to discuss in as few words as possible, are:—Whether it is the interest of France to increase the number of her enemies, and to fall out with the Helvetick Body?—Whether it is expedient for the Swiss to interfere in the disturbances of Europe, and to engage in the war against France? Whether such a rupture could, on both sides, be founded in reason and justice?—If a manifest evil, how may it be avoided?—Whether the general conduct of the Swiss nation, and that of the Canton of Berne in particular, has not been scandalously and publicly traduced?—To conclude with some remarks upon the public acknowledgement of an Ambassador from the French Republic.

Straightened as I am for want of time, and urged on by the hostile preparations around me, I shall deliver my opinion, without any minute attention either to art, or order, or elegance of style; but shall deduce it from authentic documents, and from an accurate knowledge of the present posture of affairs.---The notoriety of my principles, my inflexible adherence to the motives and *true causes* of the Revolution; my unshaken constancy, and that eager desire of moderation and neutrality, to which, at a critical period, France was perhaps indebted for one enemy less to cope with, and my Country for an addition to her repose; all these ought to ensure some degree of confidence in me.

But, in addition to this, and in order that I may be the better understood, I shall give my readers an imperfect *sketch of my political creed*.---I say of *mine*, because I here apprize them that I only speak in the character of an individual, and as a literary man, not in a public capacity.---I act under no direct instructions, but am incited purely by patriotism, by an attachment to the welfare of France, and by a love of truth and justice.

C H A P. II.

A Sketch of my political Creed.

A Glorious empire, which contained in itself alone resources against every emergency: a nation, the most observant of the laws of friendship and honour, the most obedient to reason, the most attached to its sovereigns, was extremely reduced, by a long succession of wretched administrations, and brought to the very brink of ruin.—The most desperate methods had been tried in vain; and at length, money failing, the political machine stopped, just as a mill would do for want of water.—

In this dilemma, a simple monarch invokes the assistance of the nation at large, and the nation delegates her representatives; who trace the evil back to its source, and are astonished to find innumerable abuses: they pluck off the mask from the brow of despotism; they view the victims of arbitrary power with the liveliest sentiments of commiseration; and learn with horror to what uses those immense revenues were applied, which had been rudely torn from the necessities of a suffering people.—They draw up plans for a great reform; but this being more than they were required to do, their dissolution and even destruction is sought for;
 3 till

till a regard for personal safety, co-operating with a sense of public duty, produces a revolution.

A new order of things takes place. Man's natural imperfections, impetuous passions, ignorance, fanaticism, dangers, obstacles, and jarring interests, are severally and conjointly opposed to the sublime principles of the undertaking; a spirit of enlarging upon the simplicity of the first design obstructs the attainment of the good end proposed; whilst a diversity of sentiment, in the numerous assemblies, introduces also an incoherence in their operations.

A powerful body of pretended patriots, connected with external and internal enemies, secretly opposes the public good, endeavours to mislead others, disseminates the seeds of disunion, fear, hatred, and revenge, every where, urges men on to disorders and crimes; and then exclaims, *These are the fruits of a revolution!*

Another hypocritical set, in direct contradiction to their own manner of living, extolled the blessings of abstinence and humility, whilst they consumed, in luxurious riot and debauchery, those sums which were originally set apart for the maintenance and support of their indigent fellow creatures.—

The exigencies of the state occasioned such vast expences, that all could not be preserved without sacrificing a part. The superfluities, therefore, of those national establishments, which were the personal property of none, since they could be inherited by none, were resumed, and applied wherever they

they appeared most wanted ; when, lo ! all the monks in the land denominate the action—*sacrilege !*

A proud, frivolous, prodigal, and depraved court, without morals, and without knowledge ; which cared not for the people whom it ruined, but treated every trifle as an affair of the utmost importance, and every important affair as a trifle ; which gaily made a jest of the most serious subjects, and the most sacred duties ; which sported with the happiness of mankind, and indulged itself in every excess, if accompanied with elegance and sprightly vivacity. This court, (which had, however, its exceptions,) this court, which thought itself annihilated, when it could no longer do every thing, feigns to adopt the principles recently in vogue, but secretly prevents their execution, foment internal disorders, and engages in external conspiracies. What good can possibly be produced, whilst the legislative and executive powers are openly at variance ? One must inevitably fall a victim to the other. The popular indignation, and the necessity of public safety, are warmly turned against the king. His weak intellects will never enable him to avert the impending danger ; and thus, there are no hopes that But this detail leads me farther than I would wish ; besides, I cannot consider it in all its parts ; I shall therefore break off, and return to my subject.

C H A P. III.

Is it the Interest of France to fall out with the Helvetick Body?

WITHOUT justly incurring the charge of presumption, and of great military and political ignorance, no one can seriously affirm that France has not enemies enough, in her present circumstances, or that all the chances of war are in her favour.—That such a *belief* should be inculcated in a nation, is undoubtedly proper, because it is a powerful incentive to action; but it may also be injurious, if carried to excess. Experience has shewn, that the dejection resulting from a defeat, is proportionate to the previous expectation of a victory; and that if it be of service for a people to think themselves invincible, it is not less so for their representatives to establish their calculations, by true inferences, and not upon exaggerated suppositions.

Germany, alone, is as populous as France. The latter is strongly actuated by enthusiasm; the former is better disciplined, more governable, better skilled in military tactics, and possesses more firmness of national character. The present account of the German forces does not extend to what might be

be done, in cases of extreme necessity : and some resources are now actually preparing, which had not been attended to before.—The French will not always have rain, hunger, and sickness in their favour : the discords of allies, and the ill-digested plans of the campaign ; the exaggerations of emigrants, and the talents of Dumourier ; of that Dumourier, who is admired by his enemies, yet finds so many of his own countrymen ungrateful.—He can command but one army ; you may have need of eight or ten.—Notwithstanding the campaign is commenced, you are behind-hand in your preparations ; in this respect, the German powers have the start of you, and you can only oppose newly-raised recruits to their veteran regiments. Bournonville, no doubt, is very active and well informed, highly worthy of your esteem and confidence, and able to introduce regularity where it is wanting ; but Bournonville cannot perform impossibilities.

If to this equal balance of the French and German forces,—a balance formerly acknowledged,—we add, on one side of the scale, England, Russia, Holland, Sardinia, and Rome ; together probably with Spain and Naples ; perhaps Venice, and all your internal enemies,—the equilibrium is destroyed. It will not then be sufficient for you, to declaim, to print, and to assert, *we are invincible, and shall overcome all this* ; and to ask afterwards, with a confident air, *do you doubt it ?* Yes, truly, *I do doubt it*, and three fourths of Europe also doubt it ; since, therefore, such a doubt may exist, to wish unnecef-

farily to increase your enemies, would be the height of assurance and indiscretion.

The Swiss nation, to which you are so very inattentive, would add far more weight in the balance than you seem to imagine.—Every local circumstance is in our favour. Our natural entrenchments continue gradually from hill to hill, from mountain to mountain, till they terminate in frozen ridges, which soar above the clouds. Torrents, woods, steep rocks, and narrow vallies, places of refuge impervious to any but their inhabitants; endless resources for defence, innumerable dangers for the assailants, a thousand little defiles where a few hundreds of men might stop whole armies, a vast variety of means to enclose those armies, and cut off their supplies; together with full as many opportunities for making inroads into your neighbouring provinces, and laying them waste. This is the outline of our situation.

The number of our forces amounts to upwards of two hundred thousand armed men: the military establishment of the canton of Berne alone is more than eighty thousand. To be sure, they are but militia men; but are not your best troops the same? Ours, moreover, are better armed, better clothed, and more obedient to their leaders; their organization has been growing more and more perfect for ages; and they are still better convinced than your soldiers can be, that they shall fight for their wives, their children, their fire-fides, and their liberty.

In this our militia there are thousands who have served abroad : you have also just returned us some thousand others, who were lately reckoned your very best troops ; and who, in consequence of certain circumstances, would not be the least ardent in the cause : at all events, they have contributed greatly to occasion a marked dislike of revolutions.

Our anger is not hastily excited ; but, when once we give way to it, it is with firmness, and with a steady valour, that would calmly avail itself of your fallies of impetuosity. You boast that you are Frenchmen ; we also glory in the name of Swiss ; and, depend upon it, we shall not fail to meet your advances half way.

Mistake not this soldier-like sincerity and republican fierceness for threats : we are far from wishing to entertain such language ; I merely lay before you a plain statement of facts. The Swiss cantons have unanimously resolved upon a neutrality, and they will faithfully adhere to it : they all desire peace most sincerely ; but then, the peace must be a secure and honourable one. We will not suffer ourselves to be attacked, vilified, or insulted with impunity : we must give an account to our descendants, for the reputation which our ancestors left us ; and to the people, for the happiness they enjoy.* All we ask

* Let them remember then those laws, those rights,
That generous plan of power delivered down
From age to age by their renowned forefathers,
So dearly bought, the price of so much blood !

of you is, to let us remain unmolested. Can you deem the request too exorbitant?

Your interest is united with ours. We shall guard your frontiers for fifty leagues, better than you would guard them yourselves: at any rate, you will be free from attack in one part of your territory; and a most important part it is, because, not foreseeing any chance of a rupture with the Swiss, the adjacent provinces are destitute of fortified places.

General Montesquieu, who had seen things very closely, and who was most interested in their just appreciation, in his printed correspondence with the minister Claviere, [*See Note I.*] in a letter of the 3d October, makes use of the following expression: "*the neutrality of Switzerland, which I consider as the safe-guard of France:*" and in another letter of the 22d, "*the Helvetick neutrality, which is as beneficial to us as two armies would be, one in Franche-compté, and another to the north of Savoy.*"

Do you know why General Montesquieu and General Ferrière shewed themselves so backward in obeying the criminal directions they had received? They could not tell you why; and for the following reasons: because their military glory and their duty were both equally at stake: because they saw very clearly how things then stood; whereas their employers could only guess at them from a distance: because their powers were inadequate to the undertaking proposed; and they would, in all military likelihood, be beaten, at least in the beginning: finally,

finally, because such a check might occasion others; might invigorate your enemies, and reverse the whole destiny of France.

They knew, and frequently mentioned,—what those only can forget, who are influenced by passion, resentment, or evil intentions; namely,—that you cannot have better neighbours than a phlegmatic, quiet nation, divided into a number of small confederated republics, well constructed for their own defence, and ill calculated to attack others; all desirous of peace, and mutually watching over each other's safety: because their interests are inseparably united, and because a war cannot be carried on against one of them without being resisted by all; more especially should that one chance to be the canton of Berne, on whose well-being the rest are fully persuaded that their own most essentially depends. Lay aside, then, the fallacious idea that they may be separately attacked, and indulge not the hope, which several of your miserable diurnal scribblers endeavour to inspire, viz. that our country can easily be excited to an insurrection. [*See Note II.*]

I grant there may be some discontented persons in the towns of the canton of Berne, and perhaps they may not all complain unjustly; but the people, at large, are firmly attached to government, and very sensible of the blessings they enjoy. Indeed, how should they be otherwise? Are they not capable of comparing their own condition with that of all their
neigh-

neighbours? And, of the latter, is there a single individual who enjoys the conveniences of life?

Where are fewer taxes paid? Where is property held more sacred? Where are men subject to more prudent and temperate laws? Where exists greater equality of fortunes, or less excess, either of wealth or penury, or more ample public precautions against the latter? Our hospitals are like palaces, and the dwellings of our magistrates are so many little plain citizen's houses.—Is not our country more fertile and populous than its local circumstances would apparently seem to permit?

Is there any land in Europe, where agriculture, notwithstanding the ingratitude of the soil, has been more advantageously improved? [*See Note III.*]—Can any other government be pointed out, which has managed the main springs of finance in a more moderate and economical manner? All great empires ruin both themselves and their subjects; but we are the creditors of England, Germany, France, and other powers: our treasuries are well filled; we owe nobody any thing; our people are comfortably provided for; and we enjoy the conveniences of life, when we might riot in its superfluities if we chose: for who could hinder us from sharing amongst ourselves the money which we have amassed for public exigencies? But—let no one be tempted by this detail: our possessions are *strongly guarded*.

Has any state, for a longer space of time, prudently avoided war, that most dreadful scourge of nations? Three centuries have nearly elapsed since
we

we were engaged in foreign wars : whilst all around us was tumult and contention, we lived in peace; and even now, we only dread lest your eagerness should involve you in error. Can it be possible, that philosophy should tempt you to aim at our destruction—at a time when Switzerland is unexceptionably more populous and flourishing than she ever was since her name has been recorded in history ?

I also am well acquainted with these abstract principles ; I also have preached them to others long before the revolution ; [*See Note VI.*] but I abhor their abuses, and dread their misapplication, as much as I venerate the truths they contain. They should serve as lights to direct legislators, but they are not the absolute measure of civil relationship, which ought ever to be connected with our own weakness, with the ignorance of the common people, and with local contingencies.

Our constitution, no doubt, will not bear a rigorous examination, according to your new principles : but these principles have not yet been sanctioned by experience, whilst our's are sanctioned by public happiness, differing partially according to the cantons, but at this moment superior to your's in every respect.

That there are some abuses, cannot be denied : we have not reached perfection ; we are men ; and, like the rest of mankind, have our errors, our weaknesses, our passions, and our unguarded moments, which, now and then, occasion irregularities.—I myself

have fallen a victim to them ; I also rank among the malcontents ; but shall I be so mean, so despicable, as to sacrifice truth, justice, and my country's repose, to private resentment ?—No ! With heartfelt conviction I acknowledge, that in our land there exists a preponderancy of good, which merits every respect ; and that, perhaps, there is no tribunal in the world possessed of greater probity and purer designs than the Sovereign Council of Berne.

When we find an ever-increasing prosperity to be the result of an administration that has lasted six hundred years, we need no other inducement to decide, with confidence, that the government is good, and that the constitution is not bad. Experience is a more certain criterion than reasoning ; and facts are stronger evidences than abstract speculations. States are not made to serve as models of a constitution ; but constitutions are made for the service of states :—what agrees with one nation, may not with another ; but that form is indisputably the best, which renders the people most happy.—Frenchmen ! I make bold to ask you, are you yet happy ?—that you may become so, is my most ardent wish : gladly would I resign my life, if, by the sacrifice, I could contribute ought to your felicity. At present *you* can only *anticipate* your happiness ; *we* really *enjoy* our's : our situations, therefore, are not similar. Our revolution is completed ; but we are witnesses of the tumults and turmoils in which you are engaged, and of the perils by which you

you are environed; can either your generosity, then, or your justice blame us for our prudence?

Before the revolution, you, in common with the rest of Europe, agreed, that we possessed a principal portion of public happiness; you considered us as under a wise and temperate government, as an honest, happy, and free people.---We are still what we always were; you only are altered, Frenchmen; you are no longer like what you were formerly:---excuse my freedom. Have you not, however, indirectly decreed, that you alone possess all knowledge, and all virtue; that all the ages which are past, and that all the nations which now exist, neither had, nor have any notion of happiness or of justice? Amidst yourselves, you perceive none but heroes and philosophers; in all other nations, none but tyrants and their slaves.

We are both of us guilty of this one great failing, namely, that of having changed, even as to the meaning of our expressions. The title "*aristocrat*" was deemed an honourable appellation for more than two thousand years, and corresponded with its Greek etymology, "*the government of the best*;" and in this sense we were very aristocratical; but you were pleased, all on a sudden, to make it a most atrocious term of reproach; and your populace, which judges by words only, and not by deeds, beheld us, from that time, in no other light than as so many monsters.---I appeal to every public functionary in the land---What were your former legislatures in the true sense of the word? In what

does your present National Convention differ from an elective aristocracy ?---I would recommend the epithet "*tyrant*" as a substitute for this barbarous solecism.

These are considerations which may well be offered to those who are capable of being persuaded by reason and justice, and the moral consequences of things. With regard to those men of *singular principles*, who, in their philosophical reveries, seriously propose universal republicanism as their object, and an universal war as the means of securing it, we hardly know what answer to give them: they remind one of that fabled tyrant, who, from some incomprehensible idea of proportion, caused strangers to be bound down upon an iron couch, where he racked the short, till they were stretched out to the requisite dimensions, and cut off either the feet or the heads of those who were too tall. Would it not become you to settle your own affairs into greater harmony before you interfere so violently in those of others? Besides, we only ask a short delay: only till you have attained that perfect state of order and regularity, which, as you say, cannot be long retarded. We only wish to differ from you till you become happier than ourselves.

Till this event takes place, one sole rivalry, one sole challenge, can, and ought to subsist between us. I will venture to propose it to you, Frenchmen; it is worthy of your attention, and I trust I shall be one of its most strenuous advocates. It is for us mutually to strive, *you* in your greatness, *we* in our
 2 humble

humble condition ; *you* with your bright and sparkling genius, *we* with our plain, strong, good sense ; which shall soonest render our people the most fortunate, and the most virtuous, on the face of the earth.

There is one class of men still more dangerous than the champions of universal republicanism : I mean, the *egotists* ; men ; who, insensible to all morality, are influenced by interest alone ; and who, without the least hesitation, would change the beneficent purposes of a philosophical revolution into base computations of money, ambition, and conquest. Even upon this inferior prospect, we may propose one very simple observation to them : If you wish to invade us, what occasion is there for being in a hurry ?---You will either be victorious in the present campaign or not.---In the first case, you will have less difficulty in subduing us next year.---In the second case (which is not impossible) it would be demonstrated that your enemies are already too numerous : and would you, then, in defiance of the most obvious rules of sound policy, endeavour to increase them ?

“ It is not,” said one very seriously to me, “ it is
“ not our wish to fall out with you ; but the dis-
“ trict of Vaud would be very acceptable to us : we
“ might form a new department of it, when joined
“ to that of Valais.”*—Now I most assuredly be-

* ————— O si angulus ille
Proximus accedat, qui nunc denormat agellum !
O si urnam argenti fors qua mihi monstret ! &c. &c.

Horace. B.
lieve,

lieve, that it would *not* be acceptable to you ; because you could not possess it without possessing all. If we were to rank amongst the RIGHTS OF MAN, that of assuming whatever might be *acceptable* to him, a man would have his neighbour's house pulled down in order to enlarge his own orchard. It is as if we were to tell you, " We are, undoubtedly, " your best friends ; we only wish to live in peace " and harmony ; but Alsace and Franche-comté " would prove *very acceptable to us* ; you surely, " therefore, will not take it ill if we excite a revolt " in these places, and take possession of them for " ourselves ? "

It is moreover false (notwithstanding the late representations made to the Executive Council) that the district of Vaud desires this re-union. A few discontented persons, and your enemies, endeavour to sow dissension betwixt us, in hopes of strengthening their side by the addition of a warlike nation, and of flanking their armies with a natural citadel. Order your police to investigate to their source all those wretched misrepresentations which your journalists urge against us, and you will then find, that their authors are, in general, either the emissaries of your enemies, or some of your most dangerous citizens, who, by means of anarchy and danger, seek to introduce a new order of things, and to destroy the republic ; or, lastly, that they are some insignificant Swiss who are banished from their country, into which they cannot return, unless by some violent

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lent commotion, and who endeavour to make you instrumental to this effect.

The people of the district of Vaud unite the prudence of our nation with the amiableness of your's ; they know very well what will most advance their own interests ; they have had time to reflect and make observations ; and they are well informed of the steps which have been taken both in the county of Nice [*See Note V.*] and Belgium, and partly amongst the neighbouring Savoyards. They know, that in times of peculiar moment, with an army, too, without subordination, the will of the National Convention is insufficient to prevent excesses, that although they may be treated like friends by the soldiers at first, they will soon be regarded merely as vanquished enemies, whilst their tranquillity would be converted into tumult, their safety into danger, their specie into paper, and their whole fortune would be subjected to vicissitudes ; they would immediately share in the immense national debt, the taxes, and the contributions necessary for that war, of which their native land would be the theatre ; and they would equally be sufferers in victory and in defeat ; not to mention the danger of being taken, and the consequences of peace, when each, as is customary, shall re-enter his own territory. They know also, that the total ruin of their country would depend upon a single alteration of their police at home. Their chief wealth consists in wines, of which the greatest part is consumed in Germanick Switzerland :---prohibit them from this
 expor-

exportation, and permit others to attend to it, and you ruin the district of Vaud in three years!

Land of my birth! should I then have the misfortune, alas! of viewing your destruction!--No!--most amiable people, no! You, who are so worthy of happiness; you, whose indirect representative I shall always consider myself; you, whom it shall be the study of my whole life to serve; you, for whom I would so willingly sacrifice my individual privileges, if the sacrifice might in anywise contribute to your well-being---O! believe a sincere friend, whose conduct justly entitles him to some portion of your esteem, when he assures you, that your dearest interests require repose, peace, and harmony. Secure yourselves against seduction and precipitancy, hurry on nothing, wait, behold, reflect. *I behold, I observe also; and from the very center of Paris dare to give you this advice.*

C H A P. IV.

Is it expedient for the Swiss to interfere in the disturbances of Europe, and to engage in the war against France?

IT is an old maxim, that before a war be undertaken, the *end* proposed, the *means* of carrying it on, and its probable *consequences*, should occupy the maturest reflections.—With regard to the first, what motive is there to engage us? Is it resentment? Such a motive as this, is neither moral nor political, nor becoming the Swiss nation. Can we restore life to our slaughtered brethren? Or shall we not rather, on the contrary, cause the massacre of many a thousand others?

Is it the behaviour of the confederated powers? *That* would be neither consonant with our wishes, nor our constitution. In vain would you offer us your finest provinces; we should have the wisdom to resist the temptation, since the possession of them would give rise to future dissensions and wars.—We prefer a quiet mediocrity to unsettled grandeur. Nature has allotted the boundaries to which we should limit our ambition; and the true glory of our republic is like that of Rousseau's good woman,—*the glory of living unknown.*

It

Is it then a dread, lest these new principles, opposed to our's, should overturn our constitution? Have a little patience, this will soon become more moderate, and the representation of reality will calm the fallies of imagination. The difficulty of introducing what never before existed, will soon be discovered; and we shall find that human happiness has naturally its limits, and its obstacles, and agrees better with a mixed state, than with either of the extremes: that to destroy is easy, to rebuild difficult: that principles may change, but that passions are immutable: that the same causes and resources will, at all times, produce nearly the same effects; and that the plans of angels are, from their very excellence, incompatible with the vices of mankind.—Yes, Frenchmen, have patience! Avoid the first shock, and then, both the people at large will have time to cool, and we ourselves to master our passions, and to reform abuses. [*See Note VII.*]

A few individuals might profit by this war, but our republic could not fail to lose. A spirit of conquest can never make part of our system, the inevitable consequences would be, the waste of our finances, the death and the mutilation of a great number of our fellow creatures, the degradation of our agriculture, the possibility of our being obliged to establish taxes, and thus to deprive our country of one of its principal advantages; in short, to speak sincerely—the possibility of general ruin and destruction; for it cannot be doubted that the manner of attack, and our situation under it, would
cause

cause us to defend ourselves to the very last extremity; and that our enemies could only take possession of graves and fallen edifices !

From this short survey, there is evidently no comparison between the dangers and the advantages of such a war. Be assured, our prudence has maturely considered both.—As a proof of our pacific intentions, take what is generally reckoned the most incontrovertible pledge, namely, our dearest interest, joined to the evidences of a system, which has been maintained near three hundred years, during all which time we have never been engaged in external war.

But after having been thus sincerely informed of our wishes, and peaceable disposition, do not abuse our confidence ; do not exact from us a mode of procedure, which would expose *us* to dispute with the belligerent powers, and quickly involve *you* in embarrassments.—Order the agents of your executive power to keep upon good terms with us ; watch over the district of Doubs ; mistrust the reports of certain Genevese, no less than the exaggerations of our emigrants ; and, above all, beware of the emissaries of your enemies. Do not undermine our interior tranquillity : such a conduct would but make us side with Germany ; and this would be neither advantageous to you, nor to ourselves.

We will neglect nothing to ensure an honourable peace : we should be extremely sorry to combat with a generous nation, which, like our ancestors, fights

for liberty : but if that nation can forget we are its elder brothers, if it can wish either to promote our destruction or our abasement, depend upon it you will then find us as terrible in our vengeance as we are now moderate in our offers.

Our preparations are all ready, every thing is foreseen, every thing is calculated, all, even to the last man, commanded. At the first discharge of cannon, our beacons will be lighted up, the *Landstourm* will be sounded, all will rush forward, all will be aroused to animation ;—and swear, in the presence of that God, *in whom we are happy to believe*, that we will either conquer or die !

Frenchmen, you have yet time ; remember the deeds of our forefathers ; remember our own reputation. And you, O ye provinces bordering upon our frontiers, you who are more directly interested, reflect upon our mutual danger, concur with us in avoiding the storm, and avert the impending plague, before we acquire the right of telling you in the midst of your dwellings : “ We wished for peace, “ and you resolved on war ; we solicited forbearance, and you decreed oppression ! ”

As to the rest—of what need we complain ? Are you not preparing for us employments, the most consonant with the feelings of a *Swiss* ? the pleasures of combat, the hopes of victory, and an opportunity of displaying justice ?

C H A P. V.

The public Acknowledgement of an Ambassador from the French Republic.

I HOPE the acknowledgement will be agreed to ; but in case this should not happen, I beg leave to fix your attention to the following probable reasons for our non-compliance :—In the first place, this acknowledgement is of far less import than it seems to be. Most undoubtedly, the great potentates of Europe will not be determined by our example ; and besides, *what* ought we properly to *acknowledge* ? Is it your CONSTITUTION ? As yet, you have none. Is it the provisional and temporary form of your government ? Depend upon it, we shall ever acknowledge that, which has the pre-eminence in France, provided it be firmly established.—What signifies it to us under what circumstances you chose to live ? If you are but happy, and will only let us live in quiet, we shall be satisfied.—Our local situation, and various other reasons unite us with France ; we sincerely wish not to be separated from her ; we gratefully own our obligations to her for best part of our former welfare ; but we must also provide for present, and guard against future probabilities.—If by a too favourable procedure towards you, we were to

embroil ourselves with your enemies, you might shortly be partakers in our calamity; for in the present circumstances, every extreme of revolution would militate against your interests.

In our present situation, there are some prudential details, which should not be publicly known; but I have laid them before your ministers, and your committees; and in the detail respecting general defence, they were so sensible of our situation, that they gave me positive assurances of our not being hurried, of their coinciding with the ministry, &c. For a proof of this assertion, I appeal to Brissot, to the eloquent, and all-persuasive Brissot, who, as president, spoke to me in the name of the committee.—And yet your ambassador urges our determination. “I hope the acknowledgement will be “agreed to:” but if it be not, I know a motion is drawing up, equivalent to a declaration of war, since it exacts from us what we can never grant: (but, *perhaps*, we may consent sooner than break with you.)—I give you this timely intimation, before the effusion of blood; before thousands and ten thousands of our fellow creatures are destroyed.

If, conformably to our former conduct, it be decreed to adopt a farther delay, and to consult more deliberately the sentiments of our allies, do not instantly take it as a refusal.—Our steps are slow and sure; we do not put one leg forward before the other is well-grounded; and, therefore, we avoid all sudden springs or dangerous leaps: this precaution, however, renders our efforts more certain of success.

This acknowledgement may not only render other powers indisposed towards us, but it exposes us also to disputes with you. We are convinced of your transcendant genius ; but we know that men, and even very well-informed Frenchmen, are liable to mistakes. We are the more convinced of this, because that which three years ago was reckoned the master-piece of reason, and the fairest of all possible constitutions, is now considered in quite a different light. Who then can assure us, that the same thing will not shortly happen again ? Read the journals and declamations of those times, you will find them fully as empassioned, and to all appearance equally as convincing as those of the present day.—Now, if we had acknowledged the constitution of 1789, would you not have cause to blame us in 1793 ? And who yet knows what may still happen ?

For the rest, the constitution is out of the question, as you do not yet possess one : the acknowledgement of your representative, the means of diplomatic communication, and acts of good neighbourhood, are therefore the only objects at issue. These, the majority of our government will certainly be induced to grant, whatever be that form of government under which France shall think fit to live.

* * * This sheet was already in the press when I received the satisfactory news that the Sovereign Council of Berne, adhering to the previous agreement of Zurich, had resolved to give the requisite title to the Ambassador of the French Republic ; and all
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the other cantons will probably follow the example. O may this act of amity disconcert the malevolent, and prevent the pretences and intrigues they have incessantly practised, in hopes of bringing on a rupture!—Upon this occasion, all due justice should be paid to Zurich; for from the beginning of the revolution, she has uniformly conducted herself in so prudent a manner, as to deserve the esteem and gratitude of both states.

C H A P. VI.

Has not the general Conduct of the Swiss Nation, and that of the Canton of Berne in particular, been scandalously and publickly traduced ?

FIVE heavy accusations are continually laid to our charge :

- 1st. An ill-will towards the revolution ;
- 2^d. The asylum granted to emigrants ;
- 3^d. The project of dismissing the French ambassador ;
- 4th. The assistance sent to Geneva ; and,
- 5th. The partiality of our Gazette.

With regard to the first, it must be allowed, that the revolution did not begin under the happiest auspices for us : since almost at the very outset, our distinguishing title of government was converted into a most atrocious term of reproach. This single alteration of a word has contributed more than all the rest, to excite reciprocal animosities.—The idea, moreover, of our dislike is exaggerated, not only as it is not generally received, but also as the revolution has some very warm partizans, who consider the successes of the French, in some measure, as their own ; without however, being tempted to imitate their conduct, because different circumstances require a different treatment.

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The asylum granted to emigrants, without any other assistance, cannot be considered other than as an act of hospitality, or as a speculation in finance to increase the number of citizens: and in this respect too, a sovereign decree has restricted their numbers.—This refuge has been also favoured by peculiar circumstances; and it is not our fault if the Count d'Artois be still named colonel-general of the Swiss. I aver that, till the 10th of August, recommendations for promotion were always made to him. Must all our officers necessarily be philosophers?

The project of dismissing the French ambassador is extenuated, by referring to its date alone: it was immediately after the 3d. of September. [See Note VII.] If you have ever lost a son, a brother, or a friend,—I need say no more. [See Note VIII.]

The assistance sent to Geneva was absolutely stipulated for in our treaties. Whatever has been objected, or said in the National Convention, upon this head, only shews, that the best informed men have but four and twenty hours in the day; and that they have not always time to examine things with sufficient attention.—I do not wish to enter into long diplomatick details; one fact will clearly prove my assertion. The article was so evident to our sovereign council, upon discussion, that, as far as I can recollect, there was not a single advocate for *neutrality, and moderation, or soi-disant, in the French interest*, (which is that of œconomy,) who ventured to propose the slightest objection.—

“ But,”

“ But,” say they, “ your treaties did not require
 “ eighteen thousand men ; the stipulation was only
 “ for part of a garrison.” True ; but after fulfilling
 our treaties it was also incumbent on us to watch
 over our own safety ; and the support of our bre-
 thren. Peruse Montesquieu’s correspondence ; it
 will assist you much.

Our Gazette, alone, remains ; and this I most
 readily give up to you : it has been denounced as
 a libel, over and over again. I must, however,
 make this observation, that in consequence of these
 denunciations, a sovereign decree has prohibited
 the insertion of reflections, and prescribes an ex-
 clusive and implicit adherence to facts. A strong
 palliative may here be added ; which is, that it
 has neither surpassed nor equalled the revilings and
 calumnies of your journals. I will only quote a
 single example ; it is of recent date, and published
 under the patronage of three members of the Na-
 tional Convention ; and this, at the moment when
 the foundation of a peace was establishing.

“ PARIS CHRONICLE, 10th February, 1793.

“ The journal of Doubs, entitled *la vedette* or *the*
 “ *sentinel*, complains of the bad manner in which
 “ the Bernois received the commissioners of the
 “ district, who were sent to discover the forged
 “ assignats which are printed, and publicly dis-
 “ tributed in Berne : It says, that, in order to pre-
 “ serve their lives, these commissioners were ob-

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“ liged

“ ligned to conceal the outrages offered to them,
 “ and the insolent discourses held in their presence ;
 “ in short, it complains of some favourable expres-
 “ sion inserted in one of our sheets, touching the
 “ Bernois. We will now explain the whole mat-
 “ ter : we know the aristocracy of Berne to be the
 “ most insolent and incorrigible of any ; and some
 “ of the inhabitants to be our most avowed enemies.
 “ But we know too, that in this city, and especi-
 “ ally in the canton, there are Swiss of the good old
 “ stock, sworn foes to Austria ; consequently well-
 “ inclined towards France, and unwilling to enter
 “ into war with us. We hope they will have spirit
 “ enough to keep the canton from committing so
 “ rash an act ; it was of these persons that we gave
 “ a favourable report. With regard to the infam-
 “ ous protection granted in either Berne, or Fri-
 “ bourg, (as is still said) to the fabrication of forged
 “ assignats : it is a scandal to the magistrature of
 “ parts ; it is a species of war by robbery, of which
 “ cowards only would be guilty. Grave magis-
 “ trates, who turn base coiners, deserve to be
 “ hanged, as the vilest of men ; but, let them see
 “ to it : such a villainous procedure lowers them
 “ greatly in the eyes of their own subjects.”

What answer can be made to this violent διατριβή ?
 None. We are too much above such gross invectives,
 such palpable falsehoods ! And, do we behold
 a name dear to literature at the top of the Journal ?
 Yes ; we behold *thy* name, O Condorcet ! But, al-
 though thou heedest our reputation so little, I will

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at least pay more attention to thine : I will imagine that another person digested part of the intelligence. Shall I mention his name ? My personal vanity is hurt ; for I have often launched out in his praise ! Indeed, I esteemed him most sincerely. What can be done in this dilemma ! I luckily call to mind an expression of Montagne's, who observes, that " if " all the thoughts and actions of the most virtuous " men were scrupulously examined by law and reason, not one would be found, who had not deserved hanging, at least ten times, in the course " of his life."---I will suppose, then, Rabaut Saint-Etienne to be, invariably, a respectable character, but that *this was one of his ten times.*

One specimen of miserable witticism in your journals,---which shews, that they generally are more successful in attempts at jocularities, than accurately informed with regard to existing circumstances,---may be found in their caricature of our bailiffs. It is not true, that such considerable revenues are attached to these offices : besides, they are only sexennial, and the pecuniary rewards of a whole life. The sovereign council, and the chambers, (or committees,) produce little or nothing.---The chamber of appeals, in the district of Vaud, does not bring in three *louis*, annually, to each member ; and requires, nevertheless, distinguished abilities and assiduous application.---It is not true, that these bailiffs are so very powerful. In fact, they are delegates from the sovereign authority in every branch of public administration ; which hence derives more unanimity

mity and dispatch: but they are dependent, and amenable, in every department, to the severe controul of the various judiciaries in this branch. It is still less true, that they exact arbitrary taxes. Every fine is clearly ascertained by law: the bailiff may mitigate, but cannot add to it; and every infraction of law is subject to appeal; the qualification, requisite for the civil magistracy, is only a hundred *livres*.---There are, moreover, several examples of bailiffs' being cashiered and displaced, for abuse of power, or for incapacity. [See Note IX.]

Not contented with narrating imaginary circumstances, and adulterating real events, your journalists have presumed to suppress whatever might tend to evince the neutrality of Berne. Of the following truths the notoriety is such, as precludes every possibility of doubt.

On the 26th May, 1792, the King's brothers wrote to the Thirteen Cantons, and invited them to join in the coalition.

In September, the Emperor sent the same invitation.

In November, the like was sent by the King of Sardinia.

Our opinion, upon this head, was so strongly notified, that a polite refusal met not with the slightest impediment.

Mirabeau, the emigrant, had established a small *rendezvous* for recruits in the Canton. It was suppressed, as soon as known, and Mirabeau was dismissed.

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The abundance in our arsenals [*See Note X.*] afforded a quantity of old arms, which we could have spared with ease. The Princes proposed to purchase them; and their offer was refused.

At Arau, an artist made cannons for them: we stopped the foundery.

Prince Esterhazy, the Austrian General, threatened to force a passage near Basle. Two Swiss Representatives, (one of them Counsellor Stettler, of Berne) went out to meet him, insisted forcibly upon his abandoning the design, and succeeded.

The Ernest regiment, (which was disarmed at Aix, without having incurred the slightest blemish on their honour, yet not without painful concomitants;) this very regiment your enemies demanded at our hands. We refused to comply; and we desire you to remember the period of this refusal. The Prussians were already at the gates of Longwy and Verdun.

We, in short, prohibited your journals, from the consideration that what enlightens one nation, may dazzle another.---Latterly, pursuant to a motion I made, we have selected some, and permitted a free circulation of them. The *Moniteur*, the *Paris Chronicle*, and that which contains your debates and decrees, are included in the number; yet, it is observed, that instead of exciting the people to commotion, they rather keep them quiet: this, however, is surely not owing to their excessive moderation.

To these authenticated facts, so much superior to all empty declamation, might be added several others,

others, which, for brevity's sake, I omit. Complaints may, perhaps justly, be made of the passions of some individuals ; marks, too, of private imprudence may probably be discovered ; but, I defy any one to criminate an act of our Government, and to verify the charge.

Shall we, on our side, put in the opposite scale our preponderant grievances ? And first, the disbanding of all our troops, in open violation of every engagement,---and for the most part without indemnification, or provision allowed (at least not yet paid) to so many gallant officers and poor invalids ; who had an indisputable and sacred right to this reward : as the fruit of their labours, and the hope of their declining age ? [*See Note XI.*]—Not to mention those who beheld their sole dependance torn from them in the very midst of their career.

Shall I expatiate upon the particulars of the 10th of August ? Shall I pourtray, with an indignant pencil embittered by vengeance, the massacre of our eighty-four disarmed brethren ; murdered even in the center of the palace, of public safety, and under the protection of the laws ? Shall I direct your nauseated attention to the spectacle of melted fat streaming from a man roasted alive ;—to the palpitating entrails of a woman ripped up ;—to the convulsive agonies of men, thrown out of windows, or slain in the streets, long after they were unable to do any injury ?—No ! The mute language of facts, alas ! is but too eloquent. I would fain excite the just sentiments of regret, but fear lest I should cause
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the wounds of my countrymen to break out afresh, and re-kindle their resentment.—At Berne, I accused ; here I turn apologist : yet, nevertheless, I still feel myself actuated by the same motives.

But few words are requisite to state the whole affair. The Swiss guards were told, “ The king “ will be assassinated ; you are *his* guards ; in *his* “ service you are engaged.” Besides, it is well-known that the municipal officers ordered them, that very morning, to repel force by force. If I must blame their errors as a philosopher, yet I applaud their fidelity as a Swiss ; I admire their gallantry as a foldier.

Frenchmen ! reflect, ere you attack us. These Swiss, for a defenceless king, dared to do more than any other body of men. What would they not have done for you ?—Reflect on this, before you break with us ; we may be one day as faithful to you, as we have been to your masters.

Let us hastily pass over the 3d of September. It was not the mere act of the *Frenchman*, but of *Man*, influenced by circumstances ; nor was it the act of the nation, but of some individuals : and, however monsters may exist to the disgrace of humanity, there are nevertheless innumerable examples to vindicate its honour.

Soldiers of the Section of the Thuilleries, you will forever engage our respect,—forever be dear to our remembrance !—For, at the Feuillants you saved upwards of two hundred of our countrymen, whose lives were impatiently sought after by an infuriate populace !

populace!—With what tender care, what respectable solicitude, what ingenious address, did you, their generous protectors, withdraw them from the horrid carnage!—Oh, that you had but seen those veterans, with their large mustachios, relate to me the whole event—occasionally stopping in the midst of the recital, because their voice faltered; and turning away their faces to conceal the gushing tears;—and then, after a momentary pause, resuming their discourse with fervor!—Ah, trust me! had you beheld them, you would have perceived, that the remembrance of the benefits received had vanquished in them every sentiment of revenge.---Heavens! Should the more violent and headstrong carry it against the wiser part, and war be declared between us; if haply amongst the catalogue of the wounded or taken prisoners, any one of those citizens who composed the guard at the Feuillants may ever chance to have need of succour, let him remember, that this title alone will infallibly obtain every attention---let him but name himself, and, oh, may he give me the preference! But, this must be on the pretended score of former friendship; otherwise, I should be too much envied.

What, Frenchmen, dare I not venture to name the chief of these benefactors, without subjecting them to suspicion? And yet, were I to name the assassins of the 3d of September, they would be perfectly safe; as would also be those canibals of the 10th of August, who paraded your streets, riding in carts filled with the naked bodies of the slain; insulting

sulting and hacking to pieces the mutilated remains of those lamentable victims !---Frenchmen, the contrast appals me ! What dreadful presages does it not convey ! But I love you too well to make any comments upon a retrospect, which afflicts me so deeply, and on your behalf.

F

CHAP.

C H A P. VII.

A few remarks on the two grand principles, (Liberty and Equality.)

THE light of philosophy, like that of the sun, at a certain distance, illumines, fructifies, and animates; but, if a little nearer, it dazzles, parches, destroys, consumes. Heat should be proportioned to the elements upon which it operates. Nature indicates this truth to us, most energetically: The degree of fire, which would not prevent Saturn from freezing, would set all Mercury in flames.

To apply the moral principles of legislation should be calculated, and rendered consonant to the general weakness of mankind, to the ignorance of the inferior classes, and to the distinct character of the nation. As you cannot address a brute animal in the language of a child, nor a child in that of his father; so neither can you speak to a man without education, as you might to one who is well instructed: nor to a lively and volatile people, just emancipated from slavery, as to a free, a moralizing, and a virtuous nation.

Deliver twenty-six men, chosen at hap-hazard from among the multitude, to a Sieyes, Pethion, Buzot, Guadet, Vergniaud, Bréard, or any other

of your most enlightened Legislators; and charge them to make, of these persons, twenty-six philosophers :---they will shrink from the undertaking, as a thing impossible to be accomplished; and yet, you would fain make twenty-six millions, such !---Principles, highly philosophical, do necessarily require superior understandings to comprehend them; and the more they are sublime, the more liable will the common people be, to mistake their meaning.

Abstract theories of LIBERTY and EQUALITY rank first among this class. No nation has yet lived up to these tenets; for the aukward quotation of the example of the Spartans, is futile, and irrelevant: they had their kings, and a scanty population, with Helots for slaves; and history informs us they were far from happy, because they deviated too much from the ordinary course of nature; which must be judged of, not so much according to metaphysical speculation, as according to the experience of all ages.

But, without losing ourselves in the intricate mazes of antiquity, we shall find in Geneva an instance worthy of our attention; for, from that Nidus of Rousseaus, of Neckers, &c.---proceeded every germe of Revolution. Geneva, the most enlightened city in Europe, a city where the public spirit has long been in unison with these new principles; Geneva has incessantly been agitated with internal complaints and accusations; incessantly re-modelling its constitution, and calling in the assistance of its neighbours; who, ever since the year 1707, and

even before that period, have fruitlessly endeavoured to effect a reconciliation. And, indeed, how could any reconciliation be brought about? This people, in other respects truly respectable,---from being continually wrought upon, deceived, and [ed astray, have become restless, dissatisfied, suspicious, vindictive, and unsocial; nay, they would have been cruel also, had not the good-temper of the Alps, together with French politeness, and a consciousness of their limited power, restrained their effervescency.* Owing to their reiterated argumentations, they became disputants, instead of reasoners; and were still more unhappy than ever: they looked for public happiness in constitutional systems exclusively; whereas, it more particularly emanates from the goodness of the government, and from national morality. If, therefore, principles, probably exaggerated, were incapable of introducing order and harmony into a small republic;---a republic, whose population is almost entirely confined to one city, and whose inhabitants are naturally of a gentle, brisk, and amiable disposition;---if, on the contrary, they have produced an incessant agitation only; may it not be probable that these very principles,---but still more forcible in their tendency,---excited in a nation still more lively, and nearly eight hundred times more populous, will disseminate the seeds of everlasting fermentation, in the present case, also?

* Happy restriction, sure; for what must Genevan *cruelty* have been, without the admixture of that Parisian *urbanity*, which is now proverbial?

B.

I merely

I merely throw out this suggestion as implying one of my doubts, since you desired all strangers to lay their doubts before you. Yours, moreover, is the cause of humanity ; for it is almost come to such a pass, that you must either conquer or be conquered. In the latter case, we shall return to pristine barbarity : princes will enter into a confederacy, and knowledge will insensibly contract itself ; people will attribute to philosophy even the very dereliction of its principles, and readily consider as its consequence what is only the effect of existing circumstances. A rod of iron will be extended over all Europe : ignorance, fanaticism, and the terrors of the inquisition, will again spring into existence ; and thus our ill-fated descendants will groan under the effects of a revolution which should have constituted their felicity.

On the other hand, should *you* conquer, if your successes are too rapid, if your imaginations are puffed up, if your principles run into extremes, and a spirit of conquest gains the ascendancy over you ; you will then forget the object you first had in view. Then will destruction, and death, and pillage, and all the complicated miseries of war, extend far and wide. *The reign of anarchy will commence !* The banners of liberty may, indeed, float in the gale, but the earth will be defiled with slaughter and devastation : individual property and general safety will be respected no more ; the arts will languish ; the sciences will decay ; public morality will become degenerated, and Europe will again sink into barbarism,

barism, conformably to that immutable law of nature, by which all extremes approximate to each other.

Oh, may you steer a middle course, and may more moderate measures contribute to fulfil those expectations, to which the dawn of your liberty gave birth ! May your representatives fully comprehend all the dignity of their situation, the greatness of their duty, and the extent of their responsibility ! All Europe has its eyes upon them, and posterity will determine whether they were the *benefactors*, or the *scourges* of mankind ; the instruments of Divine *wrath*, or of Divine *benevolence*.—The foundations will shortly be laid : the time is at hand ! Let them construct the new constitution with the most solemn deliberations.

Since every one is at liberty to give his advice, I will venture to state *a few other remarks upon the two grand principles in question.*

EQUALITY, (in its *new* sense,) a principle truly sublime in theory, is one of the most difficult to be put in practice that can be devised. The rapidity of its progress, the magnitude of its consequences, the impossibility of ascertaining its limits, and the interest of the majority in its abuse ; all these several circumstances contain probably the fatal causes of every public calamity.

In the eye of civil law, *equality* is a sacred principle, violated by tyranny and injustice alone ; it is the ground-work of mutual safety ; and according to its precepts, there is no other rank, no other title,

title, than that of truth and justice; nay, I mean still more, that if the balance be perfectly *in equilibrio*, the judge ought then to give sentence in favour of the poorest claimant, because he derives less advantage from society than his antagonist.

Equality of right, as to admission into public places and employments, bears also a respectable and a plausible appearance; it seems to pave the way for merit, but unfortunately, however, experience sometimes evinces to the contrary.—Its establishment may, and ought to be attempted in a rising state, and under a new constitution, in which every impediment has been already removed, and where the wish for this one benefit does not risk the annihilation of all others. Even in the latter case, an attempt should be made towards a gradual approximation, free from any violent collision, and towards the diminution of exclusive privileges.

But when *equality* is defined in a vague indeterminate manner, as *that every one may enjoy the same rights*, then the interest of the majority soon makes a bad use of the definition: it changes to a state of warfare, of the poor against the rich, and of subjects against those in power. It must infallibly weaken subordination, order, peace, security, property, industry, and every basis of public prosperity. An excess of good may thus become prejudicial, just as when once we have overshot the mark, the longer the race continues, the greater is the aberration.

Equality

Equality exists no where *in nature* ; it is as imperceptible in the physical, as in the moral world. We view all around us a concatenated series of gradations, representative of one great *whole*, inclining downward from the immense orbs of light, even to those minute terraqueous globules, where a few insects are seen to harass and devour each other.—Lower but the summits of mountains; and level the surface of the earth; and from that moment there will be no longer vallies or rivers, circulation or vegetation; there can remain no medium, either an universal avidity, or one general inundation will prevail.

But to resume my subject; I would observe that *equalization*, if carried to the extreme, would injure agriculture and population, but particularly industry, as it would annihilate carriages and personal labour.

Philosophical simplicity is incompatible with a large and populous state.—Cast but a retrospective glance over Paris, for instance; inspect carefully any street or section, in so wide a district, and you will find that luxury supports nine tenths of the inhabitants. Who then shall give the artist a livelihood? or who will be inclined to inhabit the palaces? Must they, too, be destroyed, that people may rebuild more upon an *equality*? And would you, in humble imitation of the Lacedemonians, only allow your workmen the use of the hatchet and the saw?

No,

No, no! you want only a little moderation; you should not endeavour to do in one year the work of a century. Let the world go on a little longer in the old way, and trust to your descendants the care of perfecting what you have sketched out.—You must gain two or three victories, then make peace, and confine yourselves within your own boundaries, after sheltering your adherents, and securing your conquests from retaliation. You must not meddle with the Scheldt, till you have put the banks of the Seine in a more flourishing condition, nor blame so severely the petty despots of your neighbours, whilst you yourselves are far more tyrannical; nor, lastly, judge according to partial documents, but according to the claims of general advantage.—You must employ less of genius, less of theory in your enterprizes; but more experience, more plain, strong, good sense: above all, you must exhibit real patriotism, and invincible integrity.—In short, all your citizens should remember, that their most sacred duty is to make an uncorrupt choice of their representatives, and that when genius and virtue are put in competition, the latter must ever be preferred.

LIBERTY, the other grand principle, was, in all ages, the wish of the most liberal-minded nations; but if we turn over the pages of history (that impartial portrait of mankind) we shall find that kings and their subjects have abused her gifts by turns,*

* *Multa passi invicem ausque sunt populi. Seneca. B.*

and that nature exposes us to a continual conflict between despotism and licentiousness. True *liberty* consists in a medium equally separated from both. It places its dependance upon just and equitable laws alone, and may be defined “ *the power of doing every thing that is not incompatible with the public good.*” Where safety and a respect for property no longer subsist, *liberty* is no more. *Liberty* is indisputably one of the first of social blessings, but she is not the only one ; nor must several others be immolated at the shrine of her divinity. The grand harmony of the whole necessarily depends upon the just equipoise of all its parts.

Frenchmen ! we only differ about *one* word. You seem to have taken as a fundamental principle, *LIBERTAS populi suprema lex esto* ; whereas we retain the ancient maxim, *SALUS populi suprema lex esto*. You are agents in the cause, so are we ; time will decide upon the merits of each.

NOTES.

I.

I HAVE an affection for Clavière ; I esteem him for his talents and activity, his orderly disposition, his courage, his knowledge of mankind, and his superior abilities in the party over which he presides. France owes much to him ; and Mirabeau, who knew how to distinguish genius, often availed himself of Clavière's. I admire that noble simplicity of character which he preserves in his elevation ; I am convinced it is *attainable*, from the amiable manner with which he receives old friends, and for which he deserves to acquire new ones. But, although I love Clavière,—a man who has so much influence in our political concerns,—yet, I love my country still better ; I point him out, therefore, as one who has long had occasion to find fault with our conduct towards him, in consequence of his being at the head of a Genevese party, in opposition to a majority in our government, and against which, consequently, he must needs entertain a personal hatred. Man is always man ; and, notwithstanding his philosophy, may not Clavière, in all probability, be somewhat incensed ? Of this, I think I can discern indubitable marks, confirmed by his printed correspondence. I, therefore, object to his opinion and advice, whenever our politics, (especially those of Berne,) are concerned. I charge him with being prepossessed by the foregoing circumstances ; and I assert, in the language of Montesquieu, that “ the French Nation ought not to espouse the private piques of an individual.”

II.

THE light in which the French Revolution is held by our common people, may be inferred from the reply of a Swiss soldier, on the night of the 5th of October ; he was asked what he thought of those transactions ; “ Faith !” said he, “ I don't think much about it, for I can't make

“ out what it means. It seems to be a family squabble between man and wife, and no business of ours. Let them e’en fight it out among themselves;—but by ---! they had best not meddle with us!

III.

For all this, it does not produce enough for our subsistence, and we import nearly two-fifths of our corn from abroad. One of your pamphlets gravely accuses us of endeavouring to *cajole* our people, in selling corn at a low rate in time of dearth, by which means the state is a considerable loser. I just beg leave to observe, that this little *stratagem* is of very ancient date, as the state has at all times sacrificed vast sums for this purpose. This reminds me of an expression of Voltaire’s,—I do not exactly remember the words, but the sense is this: “ Marcus Aurelius has been accused of *hypocrisy*; because he is said to have done good to mankind, only in order to ensure their affection and esteem; for my part, I say, Heaven grant us a frequent succession of *similar rogues*!”

IV.

Look at my “Philosophical, political, and moral principles;” first printed in 1785, which may be had at Matadan’s, S. André-des-Arts Street.

— In the chapter upon princes, amongst other things, I said: “ If, after you have well regulated your own states, a warlike ardour should take possession of your hearts, there are ways of making this passion subservient to the purposes of beneficence:—Let no petty circumstances induce you to desolate humanity; but rather fight in her cause. Surely you have neighbours *groaning under tyranny*: declare war against the oppressor; and engage either to restore their liberty, or at least to correct those customs which are most oppressive. If you offer them a more perfect constitution, more equitable laws, and less burthensome taxes, malcontents will join you in crowds; and their oppressor will find more enemies in his own subjects, than you will find in his army.

“ But, in order to make your intentions well known and understood, you must make them intelligible. Unite persuasion with force; let the most eloquent writers, the shrewdest and best-informed minds, become your auxilia-

“ ries. With the standard of *happiness* you would conquer the world.”

Mirabeau thought proper to take the last part of this passage for his motto. But, I beg leave to observe, that I said *happiness*; and that the paragraph begins with “ *after you have well-regulated your own states.*” After all, by the word *tyranny*, I only understand the abuse of power, and the oppression of subjects; the true way to discover which, is by observing the degree of public happiness.—Principles in politics serve, generally, as *tools* only, and their result is the *work*: the more excellent these tools are, the more dangerous they become in awkward hands: false strokes are deeper felt, and the fractures are larger.

V.

OFFICIAL Report of Collot d’Herbois, one of the Commissioners, sent by the Convention, 15th February, 1793:

“ You know under the pressure of what circumstances your Commissioners entered Nice; pillage, rapine, and murder, polluted this unfortunate city. When the French army entered Nice, it was received as an army of deliverers; the inhabitants came out to meet the General, and promised him friendship, fraternity, and all kinds of assistance: he, on his side, promised to protect their property. Twelve hours after his arrival, the pillage began; it lasted for thirty hours, without intermission, at the end of which the General issued an insignificant proclamation to stop it: it had no effect; and two whole months were passed in this horrible situation.

“ Then, and especially on the mountain, the most shocking excesses were committed. On the mountain, a parcel of savages violated all the ties of decency and humanity; and even carried off the little animals which sustained their poor masters—they rambled from house to house, stole whatever tempted their covetousness, and loaded their mules with excessive plunder. The General, under the pretence of discipline, compelled his soldiers to protect these robberies.”

With regard to Belgium, I myself accompanied a Deputy of Namur to Dumourier’s house, to implore his adherence to his manifesto; and I saw this General, (who is as amiable by his fire-side, as he is great at the head of his armies) I saw him obliged to regret his inability to keep his promise.

VI. ONE

VI.

ONE of the greatest benefits resulting from the Revolution, is the having recalled Sovereigns more forcibly to their duty, and fixed their attention upon dangerous abuses. This benefit may be perceived in all Europe, particularly in Germany; and it merits every acknowledgement.

VII.

IT is, in great measure, owing to the prudence, and to the pleasing, well-written letters of M. Le Brun, the minister of foreign affairs, no less than to the guarded moderation and mild deportment of M. Barthelemy, the ambassador, that our mutual animosities and scruples have taken a pacific turn. The latter personage, who has been employed in the most important European negotiations, seven years in London, seven afterwards in Vienna, and five in Stockholm, has acquired a knowledge of men and things; and learned the period of time, when a cord will break, if over-stretched. Few men in his situation would have had courage and talents enough to support them, after the massacres of the 10th and 3d. In my opinion, he has greatly obliged both nations; and, I here pay him, under this persuasion, my tribute of gratitude and esteem.

VIII.

I SPEAK impartially on the subject;—I gave my vote against the dismission; and in a sitting in which it was discussed, did not scruple to assert, that the fidelity attached to the observance of engagements was limited; that every treaty pre-supposed justice as its foundation; and that military fidelity, which admitted of no alternative, necessarily engaged one to be a satellite and accomplice in the atrocities of a Nero, the follies of a Claudius, or the extravagancies of a Charles the 6th.—I state my very expression, because I find it has been differently worded in public.

IX.

I HAVE myself succeeded one, on the latter account; and in order to inspire greater confidence, shall observe, that having been happy enough to assist in rectifying the code of laws and private rights of the *Haut-Simenthal*, I was honoured

noured with a diploma, by which this body engaged for themselves and their successors, towards me and my offspring, to consider me always in the light of a benefactor. The sword I wear, and the ink-stand I write with, are tokens of their gratitude, and most endearingly remind me of a country so near to my heart, and so worthy of my regard.

X.

THERE is no state in Europe whose people are all armed, and whose arsenals, moreover, contain wherewithal to re-arm two thirds, if necessary ; a fresh proof this of our good administration.

XI.

THE active Bournonville has already seen, and done justice to part of this object. Pache, also, the minister, promised he would attend to it : I here remind him of his engagement, although he is not now in the ministry, and shall relate on this occasion an honourable trait respecting him.—He had fixed upon eight o'clock in the evening as the time for me to meet him ; at six a decree was passed for the appointment of his successor on the morrow. I was uninformed of this circumstance, and waited on him at the appointed time, when he received me and listened to my discourse for the space of half an hour, with as much serenity and attention as if nothing had happened. He concluded our conference with these words : “ I shall consider that “ day as one of the happiest in my whole life, which, by “ withdrawing me from my painful employment, will restore me to rest, to peace, and to myself.” He did not long enjoy his wish.

Pache, thou whose philosophy I admire, who lovest to be addressed in the language of blunt sincerity ; I tell thee frankly, that thy conduct towards thy country by no means meets with my approbation. Thou couldst greatly have promoted her tranquillity, and much thou canst still do, through the medium of thy recent office. In vain thou wouldst renounce thy country ; she solemnly invokes thy aid ! The only wrong she ever did thee, was occasioned by her not being sufficiently acquainted with thy worth : at the awful bar of public opinion thou art responsible for her tranquillity. And canst thou, then, ungratefully harm her ? Be not deceived. It was she called thee to the ministry ; she
created

created thee Mayor of Paris.—Art thou astonished at my words?—What! Were not thy virtues, thy fidelity, thy native simplicity of character, and thy goodness of heart, the causes of thy elevation? And is not the Swiss blood that flows in thy veins the great first cause of all?—Pache, I summons thee to fulfill the oaths of thy forefathers!

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